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**Florida Department of Health in Bay County Reminds Residents and Visitors to Stay Safe in and Around the Water**



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**Panama City, Fla** – As the outdoor temperature increases and individuals look for ways to cool off the Florida Department of Health in Bay County wants to remind residents and visitors in Bay County to use precautions and be safe while enjoying recreational water activities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has put together a list of safety tips to follow when enjoying water related activities:

- DO learn to swim. If you like to have a good time doing water activities, being a strong swimmer is a must.
- DO take a friend along. Even though you may be a good swimmer, you never know when you may need help. Having friends around is safer and just more fun!
- DO know your limits. Watch out for the “too’s” — too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much hard activity.
- DO swim in supervised (watched) areas only and follow all signs and warnings.
- DO wear a life jacket when boating, jet skiing, water skiing, rafting, or fishing.
- DO stay alert to currents. They can change quickly! If you get caught in a strong current, don’t fight it. Swim parallel to the shore until you have passed through it. Near piers, jetties (lines of big rocks), small dams, and docks, the current gets unpredictable and could knock you around. If you find it hard to move around, head to shore. Learn to recognize and watch for dangerous waves and signs of rip currents — water that is a weird color, really choppy, foamy, or filled with pieces of stuff.
- DO keep an eye on the weather. If you spot bad weather (dark clouds, lighting), pack up and take the fun inside.
- DON’T mess around in the water. Pushing or dunking your friends can get easily out of hand.
- DON’T dive into shallow water. If you don’t know how deep the water is, don’t dive.
- DON’T float where you can’t swim. Keep checking to see if the water is too deep, or if you are too far away from the shore or the poolside.



“Recreational water activities are a great way to beat the heat. However, I urge everyone to be safe while enjoying the many water activities available to us along the Emerald Coast.” Said Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CPM, CPH, Administrator and Health Officer, DOH-Bay.

For more information about water safety please visit <https://www.watersmartfl.com/> or <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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